

We Must Fight to Keep Our Black Boys Alive

The recent spotlight on systematic racial profiling and police brutality against Black boys and men has exposed a painful truth long known in the Black community: just about every Black youth and man seems to have a story about being stopped by the police, and all live daily with the understanding it can happen to any of them at any time.

Terrell Strayhorn is director of the Center for Higher Education Enterprise at The Ohio State University and a Professor of Higher Education in the Department of Educational Studies in the College of Education and Human Ecology.

But none of these credentials mattered when Strayhorn was pulled over by a White police officer in June.

He'd just bought a beautiful new car. "So I'm driving my really nice car because that's what you can do in this country, right? You can work hard and you can make good money, and then you can use your money to buy



Marian Wright Edelman

Children's Defense Fund

though the officer didn't seem to care.

"He said, 'Do you know why I stopped you?' I said, 'No.' He said, 'Because you don't look old enough to drive this car.' It sounded like a compliment, but then I had to remind him – in my head, not out loud – that in this country actually, [when] you get a driver's license, you're free to drive any car."

Recounting the story for the Children's Defense Fund training for college-age students preparing to teach at CDF Freedom Schools, Strayhorn said: "When you are

'Teach them rage is natural; rage against this thing; rage against inequality—but control it in the face of authority that can take your life, because the end of the thing is we want them to live'

a car...So I'm in my car, in my good hard-earned money car, and then comes a blue light in my rearview mirror."

"... And I watched an officer who does not know me come up to my window and say, 'Mister, I need to see your license and registration.' And I got ready to reach for it, and he reached for his gun – and I said, 'Oh, my God. I know how this ends...'

"I put my hands back and I said, 'Do I have permission to do what you just asked me to do?' And the cop said, 'Yes, you can now move.'" Only then did Strayhorn go ahead and pull out his registration and license, along with his university identification card,

mistreated, deemed guilty before you are innocent, and oppressed by that form of unbridled, misused power and authority, it is infuriating. It is offensive. It is enraging... The rage just started in my pinky toe and it climbed all up my body. But, thank God, I had what I'm going to say is the number-one thing: if you're going to teach [our children] anything—teach them literacy, teach them numeracy, teach them vocabulary, teach them history, teach them political science, but listen – teach them how to control their rage."

He continued, "... We've got to remember that while we're teaching them how to con-

trol their rage, giving them the language to have that conversation, they need words for that encounter with the police officer, that encounter with the neighbor. The reason why people fight is because words are not present for them to have the conversation. Give them the literacy tools so they can have the conversation. Teach them rage is natural; rage against this thing; rage against inequality—but control it in the face of authority that can take your life, because the end of the thing is we want them to live."

Self-control over rage at the right moment might help save a Black boy's life, though even that has certainly never been a guarantee. But no matter what, the critical next step still has to be channeling rage at deeply embedded structural racism and blatant injustice into "impassioned enthusi-

asm" for the larger fight. That larger fight can and must start with all of us by getting ourselves organized and providing our children positive alternatives to the miseducation in so many schools and the dangers on the street from law enforcement agents.

Strayhorn concluded, this all-hands-on-deck call to rage against injustice and fight for freedom is for everyone: "We've got to pursue freedom and justice not just for Black people, but pursue freedom and justice for Latino folks, pursue freedom and justice for Native American people, pursue freedom and justice for gay people, for LGBT, for poor people, for rich people, for tall people, for short people, for people who don't have anything at all, for first-generation people, for welfare mothers, for everybody. Freedom and justice for all."

Free Parks and Recreation Programming Expands to East County

By **Donovan M. Smith**
Of The Skanner News

A pilot program designed to provide kids with fun and safe activities completely free of charge is now expanding to East County.

Debuted at popular Northeast Portland Matt Dishman Community Center in June, the East Portland Community Center, located at 740 SE 106th Ave., is next in line for the amenities.

The free activities began earlier this week and will run through Sept. 9 at the center for all registered youth ages three to 17.

Registration can be done in person at either center, and the typically takes no more than five minutes to complete. Participants must bring addresses and phone numbers for themselves and their parents or guardians, and information about any pre-existing health conditions. Youth need be present during sign up so their pictures can be taken for their passes.

Portland Parks and Recreation's Commissioner Amanda Fritz called the program a valuable effort to enhance lives and reduce violence, and commended Mayor Charlie Hales for its expansion.

"This program is about more than sports or kids being bored during the summer. It's about furthering the city and parks' shared mission of equity and providing access to recreation," she said.

Mayor Hales, who spearheaded the funding campaign to open the East Portland Community Center in 2002 as parks commissioner, reflected on what this expansion means to him.

"My dad was there with me the day [the center opened.] And with this expansion more dads and sons, moms and daughters and siblings will get to make the center a part of their lives as well."

The mayor's initiative began with a \$2 million investment in the city's 2015-2016 budget, largely in response to what his office called a "spate of gun violence and youth violence" throughout Portland.

"This is an all-hands-on-deck issue," Hales said. "This isn't a city-government proposal, it's a proposal for everyone," Mayor Hales said in a press release. "We have to get upstream in the lives of our kids," Hales said. "That means letting them pick up a soccer ball or a paint brush, a pen or a guitar, a job skill or a résumé. The more of these safe, positive activities we can provide for them, the better."

More community centers will be taking part in the free programs throughout the center. With the continued expansion county, school districts, higher education, and even private businesses including professional sports organizations,

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